

## MI Child Support Formula - comments-public hearing on child support formula

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**To:** <MCSF@courts.mi.gov>  
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**I am writing to express my concern with the new child support formula. In an effort to encourage non-custodial parents to spend more time with their children, the State has mistakenly tied this in to money. Are parents not advised that it is never productive to bribe a child to obtain the desired behavior? This is what this new formula is doing for non-custodial parents – bribing them to spend time with their children. Apparently, it does not matter if this is quality time or not. The child can stare at the television all day, as long as the parent is in the same house – not even the same room – and the parent will still receive money! The State is supposed to act "in the best interest of the child" - I do not see how bribing a parent to spend time with their child is in the child's best interest.**

Custodial parents receive child support for basic care – food, clothing, housing, gas for chauffeuring them around town, etc. Custodial parents are expected to provide adequate sleeping arrangements for children, non-custodial parents are not. I had to purchase a home with a bedroom for my child however, her father does not even provide her a cot to sleep on! I am still the only parent that provides clothing for a constantly growing six year old, her father does not. If you are going to bribe non-custodial parents to spend more time with their children, then they should also be required to provide: adequate sleeping space (at least a bed, if not a room!), appropriate transportation for more frequent visits, and clothing.

Out of child support payments also comes money for the ‘extra’ activities that children want and need. I am the one that pays for dance class, gymnastics, soccer, swimming lessons, etc., as well as all the special clothing or equipment that goes with these activities. I am the one that transports her to these activities, and takes time off work to take her to doctors appointments and activities. I pay extra for a vehicle with a back seat and a safety seat because that is what is best for her. Her father purchases a vehicle without any consideration for her safety and if I want her in a booster seat, I must provide it – otherwise, it's a lap belt in the middle of a front seat! I have to pay my day care provider for the reserved time for my daughter, whether she is there or not, there is no discount because her father decides to spend time with her (he has rotating days off and therefore, occasionally has her during the week). He is entitled to two weeks, by agreement, in the summer and has yet to have her for more than four days as he is tired of her by then and she wants to come home because she is tired of being yelled at about everything. With the proposed changes, he will probably take her more and force her to stay the entire time, but will this be for the right reason or in anybody's best interest?

I do not believe the way to get non-custodial parents more involved in the children's lives is to pay them to spend more time with their children. This is the exact wrong reason to spend time with a child and is not in their best interest. The only expense this parent takes on during this extra time is a bit of food, it is still the responsibility of the custodial parent to address basic living needs, as well as any extras. Shall I explain to my daughter that she will not be able to take dance class any more because the State wants to pay her father to spend time with her? Does this sound fair to you? I will give my ex-husband credit – he admits that he does not even pay for half of his daughter's care, not even close – now the State wants to take even more money away from her care. I fail to see the fairness, logic or benefit to this

change.

I hope more serious consideration will be given to this issue and to what is best for the children. I don't believe this plan was well thought out and the complete picture considered.

Thank you for your time.

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